

REPRESENTATIVE POLICY BOARD

MAY 25, 2023

MEETING TRANSCRIPTION

Mario:

It is 6:30. Welcome, everyone, to the regular meeting of the Representative Policy Board of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water District. This is a hybrid meeting, so we have people present at 90 Sergeant Drive and we have people online. Thank you all for taking the time. First item of business is the safety moment. It's on safe driving. Watch out for pedestrians, runners, bicyclists, motorcycles, and also remember that there's a lot of young travelers who first time of spring get on their brand new bicycles and want to go riding around. So be extra careful please and read through the safety moment. Public comment, if there's anyone for the public that wishes to address the RPB at this time. Anyone from the public? No one?

Naomi:

No.

Mario:

Okay, we'll move on. The approval of the minutes of April 27th meeting from the RPB. Is there a motion to approve? Thank you very much. And is there a second?

Naomi:

Second.

Mario:

Thank you, Naomi. Any questions, comments, revisions? Hearing none, I'll follow your... All those in favor?

Board:

Aye.

Mario:

Opposed? And abstaining? Thank you very much. Communications. And we're running through this quickly because we have a public hearing at seven. There are several RPB members whose terms expire June 30th. Naomi, Peter, Brian I spoke with, already contacted his selectman. Jay has already contacted his selectman, and Michelle. So please note that you have to get reappointed and you should have received a copy of the letter that I sent to your mayors and selectmen.

Brian:

Your Honor, this is Brian. I think she's going to reappoint me.

Mario:

Representative Policy Board

May 25, 2023

So I know, Brian, that you've made contact, so hopefully that'll happen soon. The RPB Nominating Committee for RPB officers, if you're interested in a position, the vacancy is for chair coming up as my term expires. Express your interest to Naomi. She's the chair of the Nominating Committee for RPB officers or contact Jennifer. The people who I had spoken to, I've given Naomi those names, but you probably want to make sure you let her know anyway. Any questions on that at this point? You should have a list of the activities by town in your packet, so everyone can look at that.

And just a reminder that in the June committee meetings, the RPB will have some board training at all the June committee meetings. If you cannot attend your normal committee, which you would attend, please attend one of the other ones. You're welcome to do that. It will be good to go through that training. Everyone will be on the same page. It's mostly a refresher for people and it'll cover topics such as what our rules say and also freedom of information and some other items. It'll be a good time that Jeff will be hosting. Thank you, Jeff, for that. Any other communications? Thank you. Items for consideration and action. The Finance Committee regarding completeness mode and date of public hearing for the Derby Wellfield Chemical Improvement Project Application, Mr. Slocum.

Tim:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do in fact have a proposed resolution. I'll advance that. Proposed resolution dated May 25th, 2023. We're at the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority on April 28th, 2023. Follows application with the Representative Policy Board, RPB, for approval of the Derby Wellfield Chemical Improvements project, the application and whereas the Finance Committee, if the Representative Policy Board reviewed the application, recommended that the application be accepted by the RPB as complete.

And whereas the Finance Committee recommended that public hearings be conducted by a presiding member, and whereas the finance committee proposed a public hearing June 22nd, 2023 at 7 PM in accordance with special act 77-98 as amended. [inaudible 00:07:32] the RPB bylaws and rules of practice now therefore be resolved that the RPB accepts the Finance Committee's recommendation to consider the Authority's application and determined to hold a public hearing to be conducted by a presiding member on June 22nd, 2023 at 7:00 PM in accordance with Special Act 77-98 as amended and the RPB bylaws and rules of practice and resolve further that the chairperson is hereby directed to give notice of said hearing in accordance with Section 11 or the rules of practice as amended.

Mario:

Thank you.

Tim:

[inaudible 00:08:10] in motion.

Mario:

That is a motion. Is there a second?

Charles:

Second.

Mario:

Second, Charles. Discussion on the motion.

Representative Policy Board
May 25, 2023

Tim:

It's essentially self-explanatory but we should approve the motion so we can absolutely have a public hearing. This is an important project that needs to go forward.

Mario:

Thank you. Any other discussion, questions by members? Hearing none. All those in favor say aye.

Board:

Aye.

Mario:

Opposed? Anyone abstaining?

Jay:

Excuse me, it's Jay. I can't see anyone but I'm on the... Just got in.

Mario:

We see you, Jay. Thank you. The motion passes. Brian Eitzer has agreed to be the presiding member for that meeting. So thank you very much, Brian. Next item of business is the Land Use Committee's recommendation regarding completeness of the Authority's application of a non-substantial land use plan amendment in Guilford. Mr. Harvey?

Bob:

Yes, in our meeting on the 10th, we did agree to approve this and that is whereas the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority on April 28th, 2023 filed an application to the Representative Policy Board for the approval of a non-substantial land use plan amendment to the land use plan for the relocation of New England Trail on Authority property in Guilford. And whereas the Land Use Committee of the RPB reviewed the application and recommends that it be accepted as complete and considered non-substantial without a public hearing required.

And whereas the RPB concludes that the application is non-substantial and the proposed action is consistent with and advances the policies and goals of the RWA, has no expected impact on public water supply and no conflict with the trail and the existing land use plan designation of non-water system land and no financial impact on the Authority. Now therefore be it resolved that the RPB hereby accepts the application as complete and approves without a public hearing the RWA's application for a non-substantial land use plan amendment for the relocation of the New England Trail on authority property in Guilford filed April 28th, 2023 in accordance with Section 18 of the Connecticut Special Act 77-98 as amended.

Mario:

Motion, is there a second?

Jay:

Second.

Representative Policy Board
May 25, 2023

Mario:

Thank you very much. Discussion?

Bob:

We talked about it at our land use meeting and it's only slightly moving the trail up to a ridge and really it's not going to have, as we believe, not that much difficulty changing of anything that's going to happen, deeming it non-substantial.

Mario:

Any other questions, comments?

Stephen:

Mario, this is Steve. I have one question quickly.

Mario:

Yes, Steve?

Stephen:

It seemed like I read the old portion of the trail was going to be maintained anyway for a different purpose. Is that correct?

Bob:

I don't have an answer to that, Steve. I think it was on one of the roads, but I don't think-

John:

I can answer the question if you'd like, Bob.

Bob:

Okay, thank you, John.

John:

Yes, Steve, as noted in the application, the existing trail for that the New England Trail goes over is a woods road and is a shared trail with our Genesee recreation system. So we're not going to abandon that, we're going to keep it for our trail system and CFPA is just going to move the New England Trail to the new proposed location.

Stephen:

Okay, thank you.

Mario:

Tim, you had a question.

Tim:

Representative Policy Board
May 25, 2023

Answered my question.

Mario:

Okay, thank you. Any other questions? Hearing none, we'll try your minds. All those in favor of the motion say aye.

Board:

Aye.

Mario:

Anyone opposed? And abstaining? The motion carries. Thank you very much, Bob.

Bob:

You're welcome.

Mario:

Next is discuss and act on resolution regarding the Regional Water Authority's proposed fiscal year 2024 budget, Mr. Slocum.

Tim:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is the proposed resolution dated May 25th, 2023, whereas the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority requested the Representative Policy Board to review the Authority's FY-2024 proposed capital and operating budgets. And whereas the RPB held workshops on April 17, 2023 and April 19th, 2023 at which time management and the Authority presented the proposed budgets and responded to questions in a professional, concise, and articulate way. And whereas the RPB has a duty to review the budgets and to comment, but has no other statutory obligations or authority.

Now therefore be it resolved that the RPB wishes to express its appreciation to management and the authority for the professionalism of their presentation and express its overall support of the FY-2024 proposed budgets and further resolved that the RPB also agrees with the recommendations contained in the OCA's budget review letter dated April 26th, 2023 and further resolved that the RPB consensus regarding the proposed budgets is that they are reasonable and supported and further resolved that the RPB believes the Authority's overall financial plan provides for stable finances and the essential funding of capital projects and the flexibility of the reduced operating expenses will support the steps necessary to address financial obstacles during the fiscal year.

Mario:

[inaudible 00:14:38] motion.

Jay:

I second that, Mr. Chairman.

Mario:

Thank you, Jay. Discussion?

May 25, 2023

Tim:

I guess further comment, again, it's well self-contained and the motion is written and proposed. We really do express our thanks. It was very well delivered on both those meetings to the committees at large and provides us with a fuller understanding of what goes on and what needs to happen and we're most appreciative of that, and we'll support you all away and hold you to task if you falter. But beyond that, we have no authority to do that.

Mario:

Any other questions, comments? Hearing none. All those in favor of the resolution say aye.

Board:

Aye.

Mario:

Opposed? And abstentions? Motion carries. Thank you very much for the presentations and for all the hard work on the budget. Next is the Nominating Committee for the Five Member Authority. I'm going to recuse myself. You can all talk.

Stephen:

This is Steve. Is the Vice Chairman conducting the meeting at this point?

Bob:

Yes, I am, Steve.

Stephen:

Okay, thank you, Bob. You all received a letter from us on our recommendation to the Authority. I do have a resolution, Bob. Quickly before that I would like to provide some information. Our committee worked very hard on this, put a lot of effort into it and had to work quickly. We realized early on that the process needed some updating for the current world that we live in. First thing we did was rewrite the ad for the position such that we could attract our ideal candidate. And we stated what that was. We were looking for someone with an engineering background, a regulatory background that had high level experience and strategic planning and somebody that had extensive board experience as well at a high level. So long story short, we also realized that besides the paper, which is probably not the best way these days to advertise, we went to a number of electronic formats to also get the word out and attract the kind of candidates that we wanted.

In the end, we got about 15 candidates who were within the district. And that's a limitation that we have in the process by our authority. And we had a number of other candidates just because it was in the electronic format that responded to this who were outside the district that we could not consider. So in any case, we had three candidates that we met on May 4th, and there were three candidates who clearly met our requirements for the ideal candidate and we decided to interview those candidates on May 11th. Sometimes people drop out, not living up to their resumes. In this case, all three were great interviews, and we met the next day to review the personnel that we had interviewed. As mentioned, all of them met the criteria. I wish we could have hired all three. They all brought different things to the board.

May 25, 2023

However, after a thorough discussion and a look at all of the details separating them and what the board needs at this point, we came to a unanimous decision to recommend Mario for this position, not only based on the engineering background, but an engineering background in several areas for the towns, for regulatory and for utility, additional board experience and a deep level of the RWA, which will enable him to move into the position and be effective quickly. So with that in mind, I will read the resolution. Resolve that Mario Ricoszi, be and hereby, is appointed as a member of the Five Member Authority of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority, effective for the term beginning July 1st, 2023 with his term to extend until December 31st, 2023 or until his successor is appointed and has qualified. And we made that term July because it's the end of his term as chairman and also gave the town, Branford, a chance to think about a replacement for him. So that's the resolution. Any comments? Questions?

Charles:

I'll second that as a motion.

Stephen:

Thank you.

Bob:

Thank you, Steve. Is there any-

Mark:

I think your committee did a great job, tell you the truth, Steve. I've been on that committee before and I think your letter that you wrote was excellent and I think you did a great job. That's my opinion.

Stephen:

Thank you.

Bob:

Is there any discussion at this time? Tim?

Tim:

Not so much discussion, but just to amplify Steve's remarks and comments. I've had the privilege of serving on two Nominating Committees for board members and of course the one that we've just advanced as a nomination. And in Mario's case, we really felt he could immediately step in, not so much take charge, but be a ready fit for the Five Member Authority, which we thought, I believe, collectively was essentially important because not that you've been [inaudible 00:21:37], but you've been without four members. You've been extra busy and here's someone who can step right in and we're very confident.

So just in general, I certainly thought his support from me and the nominating committee just was... It was just an appropriate fit, the best fit for the organization and I'm happy to support him along with the rest of us. As you all know, we all supported him, but I just felt I should say all of that. We have high expectations and I think he's there. You'll help out.

Representative Policy Board

May 25, 2023

Bob:

Is there any other comments or discussion? Hearing none. All those in favor?

Board:

Aye.

Bob:

Any opposed? Any non-vote? I guess it's so ordered. Thank you to the committee again. I guess we can bring Mario back.

Bob:

[inaudible 00:23:08] and I can turn the meeting back to you.

Mario:

Thank you.

Bob:

Congratulations.

Mario:

Thank you. And thank you all for the vote, I think. I'll let you know in a few months. No other items for consideration and action. But thank you to the Nominating Committee for all your hard work.

The Finance Committee, Tim?

Tim:

Oh, yes. Indeed. Got a lot of time tonight. Finance did meet on Monday, May 8th and we reviewed the Derby Wellfield application and process and we've acted on that this evening. We also discussed quite a bit about the budget and we're happy to advance the motion and did so tonight. We also were advised by Rochelle that there's a proposal forthcoming from CliftonLarson and we will hear it out. They're our auditors. We'll hear that out on the June meeting that we have coming up next. And then Chair Ricozzi also reported to the Finance Committee that attorney Jeff Donofrio will be meeting with all of the subcommittees, because that basically encompasses all of the membership, to review RPB member responsibilities, roles, things that will dovetail into probably their first introduction to the team regarding member duties, conflicts of interest, and importantly FOIA, freedom of information. So it's just going to be a little primer that will probably be invaluable to us, and that'll be scheduled as time goes along.

Mario:

In June.

Tim:

In June, exactly. But who knows? We'll see what happens. So our next meeting will be June 12th, 2023.

Mario:

Very good. Any questions for finance? Hearing none. Moving on to the Land Use Committee, Mr. Harvey?

Bob:

[inaudible 00:26:01] again. We had our meeting on May 10th out at Lake Gaillard, and we did have a presentation on invasive species and some of the work that the Authority's been doing. Some of it has to do with clearing some Japanese barberry using a mini excavator with a grapple head by actually pulling the material. I guess it was done about a year ago and it had not come back. And I guess this is an area that they're hoping to do some harvesting of wood from the forest in the future. And this is really was a trial basis. We also spoke about the trail moving in Guilford and our usual presentations, I don't know if Larry's going to have time to make an announcement, but I'll give that currently the levels were at 99% and there was no drought status. And I think that's all I need to report in an effort to save some time.

Mario:

Any questions for land use? Thank you for pinch hitting. You've been doing a lot of that lately. Consumer Affairs Committee, Steve Mongillo.

Stephen:

Hi, Mario. Good evening and congratulations.

Mario:

Thank you very much.

Stephen:

In the interest of time, I'll do this very quickly. We met on May 15th. Prem introduced Paul Wehner, who is now RWA'S Process Excellence Director and he'll be helping out since Dana Bochan is going to be working on the new CIS implementation. He brings a lot of history, has an IT background, good choice to fill in and help them out. Dana, without going into a lot of detail, talked about improvements they've made in the six critical process areas. They were substantial improvements and congratulations to that group for a lot of hard work. Four of those areas are already complete. The last in billing and capital planning improvements will be done by the end of May.

Jeff's been busy with the operating budgets. He attended a meeting of the New Haven Advisory Council to answer questions about rates along with Dave Fox. He's looked at the application for a confidential plumbing company, the application for the Derby Wellfield and [inaudible 00:28:48] planning amendment. And he's also going to prepare, as mentioned, for our next committee meetings to do a presentation on freedom of information. He attended our nominating committee meetings and fortunately reported there were no consumer issues at this time. So we have a couple of people lined up for future Authority meetings and that was our meeting on May 15th.

Mario:

Any questions of consumer affairs? Hearing none, we roll into Nominating Committee. Steve Mongillo, anything else to report?

May 25, 2023

Stephen:

Yeah, just a couple of comments. We ran into that issue of the person has to be within the district, but I think with Wheeling Water now and private ventures, if the legislation ever gets open, that's something that might be reconsidered. You might not want somebody from New Jersey, but somebody from a surrounding town may make sense and it is a limitation in looking at applicants. The other thing, and this is just my personal opinion, I would've hired all three candidates. They were excellent and it's my argument for expanding the five member authority to have more perspectives and more flexibility moving into the future. Otherwise, I gave you basically what we did and everybody did a great job on that committee contributing to getting that job done. So I was glad to work with a nice group of people on that.

Mario:

Okay, thank you. Any questions for Steve? I do appreciate all the hard work you went through.

Stephen:

You got to do the hard work now, Mario.

Mario:

I've already been primed.

Stephen:

Be careful what you wish for.

Mario:

David gave me a hard time. Speaking of David, Authority and management. One minute, 48 seconds.

David:

We met this afternoon and three of our committees met, Audit Risk met.

Catherine:

Audit Risk met, discussed our plan for the fiscal year in 2024, and we reviewed the risk management demo and I really can't say anything else about it because we're out of time.

David:

[inaudible 00:31:04] Environmental, Health and Safety Committee.

Kevin:

Good evening. Congratulations, Mr. Chairman. We met and we had discussions on three different points, one of them the legislative update and touched on a couple topics. As Steve Mongillo just mentioned, we had a water supply plan update and environmental compliance update.

David:

Thank you. We also met as the Compensation Committee and we reviewed our employee engagement with our HR director and the fact that we're having a lot of people participating and we have something

Representative Policy Board

May 25, 2023

called Cool Leaf, which we're now using for recognition and keeping track of some of the good things that our people are doing on our team. And we've got an over 75% satisfaction with those who have taken some of the false surveys that we're doing and gives us an opportunity to do more surveys, get more updates. So there's an increase in appreciation of working here at the Authority. So that's good.

We also met and approved an application for the purchase of target... Can I say that title? Target two plumbing asset purchase. I know tonight's public hearing is on target one, so you'll be seeing that information in the coming days. And I wish to say thank you to the RPB. We are very pleased that we are now back to the Five Member Authority. We're very pleased that someone with Mario's experience, professional experience [inaudible 00:32:30] board here is helpful. We also thank you for the land use amendment support and the support and positive comments on the budget.

Larry:

And my portion is 129% and 98%. 129 is the money. 129%.

Mario:

Anything else? Any questions for Authority and management? Motion to adjourn?

Jay:

I'll move.

Mario:

Thank you. Second?

Brian:

Second.

Mario:

Thank you. We're adjourned at 7:00 pm.